

The Easiest Part of Being In a Quartet is Choosing Your Name!

By Sandi Wright

Going Steady – Choosing your partners for better or for worse

- Finding four compatible singers who blend
- Selecting a name
- Separating the responsibility
- Having like goals
- Can you live together?

SHOW Business

- Building a repertoire
- Plan your performance
- Discovering who you are

Opening Uptune

No emcee

Familiar Swing Tune

Thank the audience and set up the ballad

Ballad

Introduce quartet members, tell a humorous story, or set up the next song

Solo or Novelty Song

No emcee

Familiar Uptune

Thank the audience and let them know this is your final song

Big finale

Rehearsal Techniques

- Working the technique and the emotion
- Subtexting
- Rehearse performing
- Planned and unplanned movement
- Creating a character

Competition

- Name registration
- Deadlines
- Category knowledge
- What is your goal?
- What if you don't get there

Breaking Up is Hard To Do

- Knowing when it's over
- Replacing a part or retiring the quartet
- Move on
- Divide the assets
- Part as friends
- Have a Prenuptial Agreement

Show BUSINESS

- Work it like a business
- Expenses
- Income

The P's of Marketing

- Product
- Price
- Personnel
- Place
- Promotion

Sharpen Your Business Skills

- Treasurer
- Public Relations
- Social Media
- Costuming and Character Tools
- Contact Person
- Merchandise Management

Contract Should Include:

- Exact time, date and place of the performance
- Length of performance
- Performance fee agreed upon
- Payment to be received on site
- Parking fees included
- Penalty if you don't sing within 30 minutes of the appointed time (\$50+)
- Microphone requirements
- Dressing room requirements
- Any special requests or material necessary to complete the performance



The Care and Feeding of Ambiance

Written for show chairmen and anyone else who may find themselves responsible for the international quartet champions. Is Ambiance human? Well, some may argue, but really we are (I think). To be safe, don't get your fingers too close to our mouths!

Ambiance is comprised of some surprisingly normal people. Three of us are married. Three work full-time outside the home, one works in her home. All four of us have step-children and children of our own. Two are frontline chorus directors, but all four of us have had directing experience. All four are non-smokers. We live in average households with average incomes and mortgages. We do things like go to the movies, the theater, and attend other musical events. We go to church, kid's sporting events, serve in professional organizations and clean our own homes. All in all, we are pretty dull . . . especially during the week.

BUT...when the weekend comes, we hop on an airplane and become STARS! Well, not exactly, but some people think we are. Maybe this little guide will help you understand what will make Ambiance the best we can be for your event.

Who are we anyway?

Ambiance is the entertainment entity of Ambiance Productions, Inc. *Elizabeth Hardcastle* sings the "lead" vocals. She's one of the best in the world. She is also the spokesperson for the group. Liz is earthy and honest, and she'll make you laugh. *Shelly Sweet Rubenic* sings the kind of lyric soprano "tenor" you wish every harmony singer could. She's the tallest member of the quartet. She's also the youngest. *Diane Huber* sings the rich low "bass" notes that make us sound so big. She has the neatest smile, and is just as kind and gentle as she looks. *Sandi Wright* sings the alto-range "baritone." She is a two-time international champion quartet singer, and she is very creative. The fifth member of Ambiance is *David Wright*. He arranges all our music and serves as our musical advisor. He also directs, produces and mixes our recordings.

Ordinary People

While your chorus is busy preparing for its annual event, Ambiance must be ready for a show every weekend. You can imagine the strain your family would feel if you told them that you were going to be in a show (out of town) every other Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Pretty awesome, huh? Go ahead...ask...and listen to what your family says.

The point is simple. Ambiance is excited to be performing on your show. But if it is on a Saturday night, and if we don't fly to your town the night before, it's because we wanted one more Friday night to see a son off to the homecoming dance, or yell for the one in the soccer tournament. If we fly out at dawn on Sunday, it's because we might still make it to church or to celebrate Grandma's birthday.

As much as we would like to join you for your dress rehearsal the night before, or your morning-after brunch, there are times when a hug at the airport from the men in our lives can seem more important. Please understand.

Friendly

Ambiance is made up of outgoing, enthusiastic, modern working women, and we want to get to know as many of your chorus members as possible in the short time we have in your town. Please let your chorus members know that they are more than welcome to talk to us and get to know us. We will be happy to sing for you, sing with you, and go home having made some new friends. You would be surprised at how many people are actually afraid to say hello. Before we were champions, we were chorus members (we still are). And when we go home, we clean toilets and wash underwear, just like everybody else. We really don't bite. That's just an ugly rumor started, no doubt, by some old sound judge.

Publicity

If it isn't included in this packet, you will receive a photograph as well as a brief biography and fact sheet about Ambiance the group and Ambiance the personnel. We will be happy to give advance interviews to your local reporters by telephone, and are usually able to be reached during the day. Contact Diane Huber (314-441-8958) or Sandi Wright (314-361-3189), to arrange date and time.

Accommodations

Ambiances uses the precious hours before and after each show to rehearse. Since you know the territory, we would appreciate some guidance in making reservations at a reasonably priced hotel near the airport so we can make a quick, quiet get-away via courtesy van the morning after. We will need two double/double rooms – connecting if possible.

Getting There

We have a wonderful travel agent. She knows our work schedules and our special needs, and she has never failed to get us to a show on time. Her name is Anita Kiesel, and her toll-free number is 1-800-966-6474. Please call her if you want to inquire about prices, times, air fares, or the whens, wheres and hows of our trip to your city. Anita will be happy to work arrangements around all schedules, and even bill your chorus directly if you prefer.

For your information, Sandi and Diane fly from St. Louis International Airport. Liz comes from Decatur, IL and can only be routed through St. Louis or Chicago/O'Hare. Shelly flies from Chicago/O'Hare.

We are very comfortable taking a hotel shuttle when we arrive in your city. Should you choose to have someone meet us when we come in, we travel with four suitcases, four hanging bags, and a box or two of recordings. U-Haul? No. But a van, station wagon, or at least a cleaned-out trunk would be helpful.

Tapes and Compact Discs

We do have tee-shirts and three different cassette tapes and CDs to sell at the performance site and cast party. Please confirm this with the theater and inform us of any rules concerning the sale of these items. We have found that two tables placed near the exit work best. We will need help setting up before the show, and some sales assistance pre-show, at intermission, and immediately following the show.

Dressing Facilities

We want to look great for your audience, so if your theater has professional dressing facilities, we are ever so grateful for the use of one.

Sometimes our dressing room is simply the girls' bathroom in the west wing of the high school. Whatever you have, we'll make the best of it.

However, we may opt to apply our make-up in the hotel room before we come to the theater. Please let us know what the facility is like so that we may choose the option best for your chorus show.

Our make-up is water based, so we will need running water. Lights are important. Mirrors are helpful. A rack for our costumes would be peachy. A place to sing and warm up (away from the stage area) would be great.

Hostess Tips

We have some peculiar allergies, so we tend to take precautionary measures to keep our voices as strong as possible for your show. We never drink anything stronger than water before a performance. And we have been known to consume copious amounts of H₂O before hitting the stage. So please, put some fresh water and cups in our dressing room.

We will eat just about anything, and sometimes a piece of fruit or cheese and crackers can be a real lift if we haven't had a meal since 4 p.m.

We love flowers, but they are hard to transport home (and we always fight over the vase). So, in lieu of flowers or wine or other extravagant gifts, do something extra special for your director instead (we directors stick together, you know).

Lights! Sound! Action!

We can perform up to two hours, however, the average performance is somewhere between 30 and 45 minutes. We prefer to have it be all at one time (instead of ten minutes here and 15 minutes on the second half). This is because we have a theme/package performance. When we break up the package, it loses some of its continuity.

We do not require any special lighting, but we work very close to the edge of the stage and we move around a lot. You may want to light the entire front center apron of the stage to provide the best area for us to work. If you have the luxury of

special lighting effects, we would not mind a single spot or soft light on our ballads. Note: This can do mean things to your videotaping, so check it out with your lighting engineer as well as your video crew before you get crazy with effects.

We work best with four individual microphones (cordless or equipped with long cords) which can be removed from the mic stands and held in our hands. Please inform your sound engineers that we do not "eat" the mics and that they should plan on a 6- to 12-inch proximity. We would appreciate a few minutes on the stage for a sound check an hour or so before the show. We stand (from stage right) tenor, lead, bass, and baritone.

Afterglows and Cast Parties

We look forward to relaxing and getting to know your members at the cast party following the show. But please understand that while your chorus members are party animals, we are still working. We would be honored and happy to sing, but if it looks like there will be many other groups on the program, we would prefer to sing early (yes, even first!). Smokey rooms may damage our voices for the performance we may be doing next week.

We want to be around for a long time, and given the amount of energy and stamina it takes to be at our best, we appreciate your help in seeing that we get plenty of rest. Please be understanding if we choose not to attend the after-afterglow, everglow, or chorus breakfast.

Video and Audio Taping

Ambiance understands that a host group may want to preserve a lasting momento of the chorus show through the use of live audio and video recording. Because Ambiance Productions, Inc. produces and sells recordings of Ambiance, we will not allow our segment to be included on your recording if it going to be sold as a profit-making venture to its members or the public. If this recording is provided at cost or no cost to members *for archival or educational purposes*, we have no problem with the inclusion of Ambiance's performance. If the tape is to be broadcast as part of a local television, cable or radio program, please secure the written permission from Ambiance Productions, Inc.

In Conclusion

I guess we are pretty hard to live with after all. But then, if you came to my town, I'd want to know what you really needed, too!

We will try to make this the best show you've ever had. And you can bet that Ambiance will be giving our 100% on your stage. Best of luck as your plans unfold. We're here for you if you have any questions at all. It is an honor for us to share the stage with you and your chorus. Please tell them so.